REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated October 10, 2006, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on January 10, 2007. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

In the specification, the paragraphs [0005], [0039], [0045], [0046], [0051], [0055], and [0056] have been amended to correct minor editorial problems.

Claims 1-7, 18-21 and 30 are pending in the application. Claims 1-7, 18-21 and 30 remain pending following entry of this response. Claims 1-5, 18 and 30 have been amended. Applicants submit that the amendments do not introduce new matter.

Specification Objections

The specification is objected to because:

The abstract contains the phrases "such as", "are provided", "As an example", "should take", "For some embodiments" and "may also be suggested". The abstract should not contain "such as", "provided", "example" and "embodiments. "Should take" and "may also be suggested" are vague and indefinite and should also not be contained within the "Abstract".

The Examiner is objecting to the abstracted based on permissible, not mandatory, guidelines. Since the Abstract, as written, satisfies the primary objective of allowing a searcher to assess the general scope of the specification, no further amendments are required. Nevertheless, in an effort to move prosecution forward, Applicants have made amendments to the abstract. Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

Drawings Objections

The drawings are objected to because figures 2-3 disclose elements with subscripted numbers which is not standard format and makes it difficult to understand. Specifically, Fig. 2, element 214 and Fig. 3 elements 208, 210 and 212.

Applicants respectfully traverse the objection. The Examiner does not cite, nor are the Applicants aware of any, prohibition against the use of subscripted numbers.

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Further, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the subscripted numbers are not only not confusing, but actually facilitate an understanding of the relationship between the various features of the drawings. For example, using subscripted numbers it is clear that all elements referenced by the base number "214" belong to the same family/type (i.e., they are all types of underlying physical representations). However, in order to move prosecution forward, Applicants are willing to use a suitable alternative format. For example, Applicants can propose using an underscored format: e.g., 214_1, 214_2, etc. Applicants submit that this change in format is unnecessary and does not facilitate a better understanding of the already clear specification. However, if the Examiner insists on a change, and if the proposed change is acceptable, Applicants will make the appropriate amendments according to the proposal.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 1-7 and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to a non-statutory subject matter. Applicants have amended the claims to limit them to a method that runs on a medium. Therefore, the claims are directed to a statutory subject matter.

The Examiner maintains that Claim 30 is clearly not a series of steps or acts to be a process. Applicants respectfully maintain that Claim 30 clearly does disclose a series of acts – in fact, Applicants submit that it is impossible to see the recitations of Claim 30 as anything other than series of steps or acts. If the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is kindly requested to elaborate on how Claim 30 is not a series of steps or acts.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 1-7, 18-21 and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicants have amended the claims to resolve any vagueness and indefiniteness. However, Examiner maintains that claims 1, 18, and 30, disclosing a

"component" and "creating an annotation," are rendered vague and indefinite because it is unclear as to what a "component" and "annotation" signify. Applicants maintain that "component" and "annotation" are given their ordinary meaning which would neither be vague nor indefinite to one of ordinary skill in the art. Definitions for these terms may be found in the Applicants' specification as well as in publicly available extraneous resources (e.g., English language dictionaries). For example, one dictionary defines "component" as a constituent part and defines "annotation" as a note added by way of comment or explanation. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1984.

Further, Applicants' specification, at paragraph [0021] states:

> "As used herein, the term query component generally refers to any identifiable portion of a query, such as a query condition, a group of conditions, a particular value used in a query condition, specified query results, formatting thereof, as well as an entire query. As used herein, the term annotation generally refers to any type of descriptive information and may exist in various forms, including textual annotations (descriptions, revisions, clarifications, comments, instructions, etc.), graphical annotations (pictures, symbols, etc.), sound clips, etc."

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims be allowed.

Claims 2-7, 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, because they are dependent upon rejected independent claims 1 and 18. Applicants have amended the independent claims to resolve any indefiniteness. Therefore, claims 2-7 and 19-21 should be allowed.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7, 18-21 and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Bays et al.* U.S. Patent No. 6,519,603 (hereinafter "*Bays*").

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as

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is contained in the ... claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). The elements must be arranged as required by the claim. *In re Bond*, 910 F.2d 831, 15 USPQ2d 1566 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

In this case, *Bays* does not disclose "each and every element as set forth in the claim". As a general matter, *Bays* is directed to annotating database entries and querying such annotations on the database entries. Thus, *Bays* is not directed to annotating the queries components, or even complete queries for that matter.

It follows that, regarding claim 1 in particular, *Bays* does not disclose <u>receiving an annotation and a request to associate the annotation with the selected query component via </u>an interface allowing a user to create <u>the </u>annotation <u>and request the association </u>with the selected query component. Regarding the original claim 1, the Examiner argues that *Bays* discloses "providing an interface allowing a user to create an annotation to associate with the selected query component" at col. 6, lines 35-39. However, this passage is directed to an interface allowing users to input annotations on database entries (i.e., records in the database), not to query components.

The Examiner argues that *Bays* discloses "receiving an indication of a selected query component" at col. 5, lines 1-21. However, the cited passage is in fact directed to being able to query the database annotations as well as the database data itself, not "receiving an indication of a selected query component".

Finally, the Examiner argues that *Bays* discloses "storing the annotation with a reference to the selected query component" at col. 9, lines 50-65 and col. 11, lines 8-15. However, col. 9, lines 50-65 is directed towards a method for filtering the information that users will retrieve when they run a query based on the users' context (i.e. what group the user is in, such as administrator, accountant, engineer, etc.). Furthermore, col. 9, lines 50-65 is directed towards a method for writing an annotation on a database entry. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn, and request that claim 1 and its dependents be allowed.

Claim 18 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1 and is therefore believed to be allowable for the reasons given above.

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For independent claim 30, the Examiner argues that *Bays* discloses "a method, comprising: receiving an indication of a selected query component" (col. 5, lines 1-21); "providing an interface allowing a user to create an annotation to associate with the selected query component" (col. 6, lines 35-39); and "storing the annotation with a reference to the selected query component" (col. 9, lines 50-65 and col. 11, lines 8-15) For the above reasoning under claim 1, these passages do not disclose these claim limitations (Applicants note that the arguments generally apply even though some amendments have been made to claim 30). In addition, the Examiner argues that *Bays* discloses "searching for stored annotations associated with the one or more query components" at col. 11, lines 16-24. However, this passage is directed towards a reader being able to browse annotations that have been associated with database material, based on the type of data the reader is interested in. Thus, this portion of *Bays* is not directed to searching for stored annotations that have been associated with query components. Finally, the Examiner argues that *Bays* discloses "providing an indication of one or more annotations, if found, associated with the one or more query components" at col. 5, lines 1-21. However, this passage is directed towards a method for querying annotations that have been associated with database material, not towards providing an indication of annotations that have been associated with query components. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn, and request that claim 30 be allowed.

Therefore, the claims are believed to be allowable, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

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Conclusion

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted, and
S-signed pursuant to 37 CFR 1.4,

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